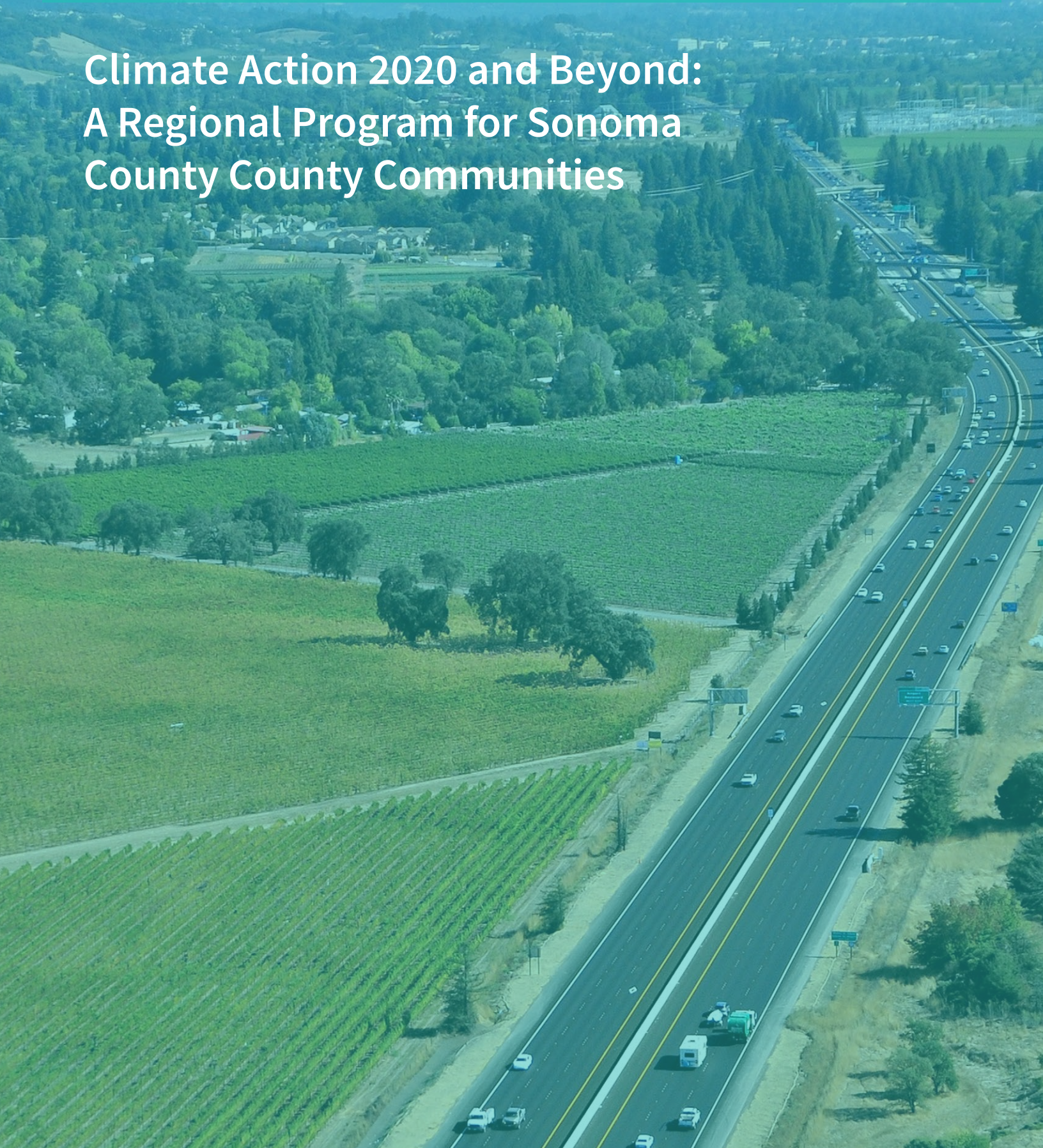


# Executive Summary

Climate Action 2020 and Beyond:  
A Regional Program for Sonoma  
County County Communities





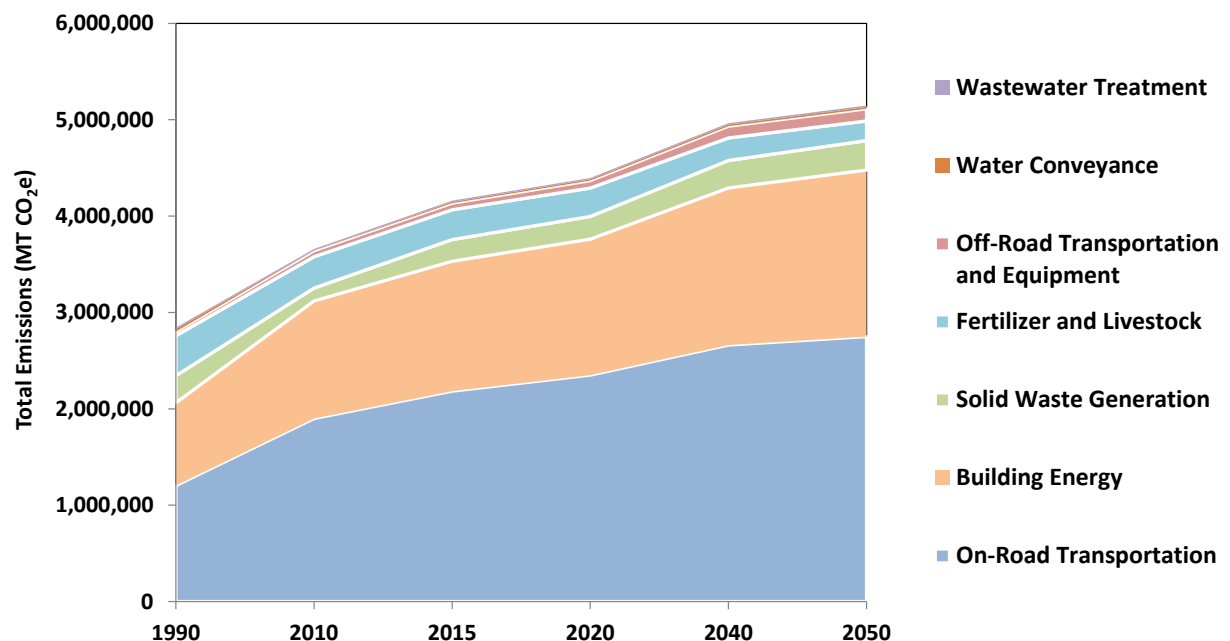
# Executive Summary

## ES.1 Introduction

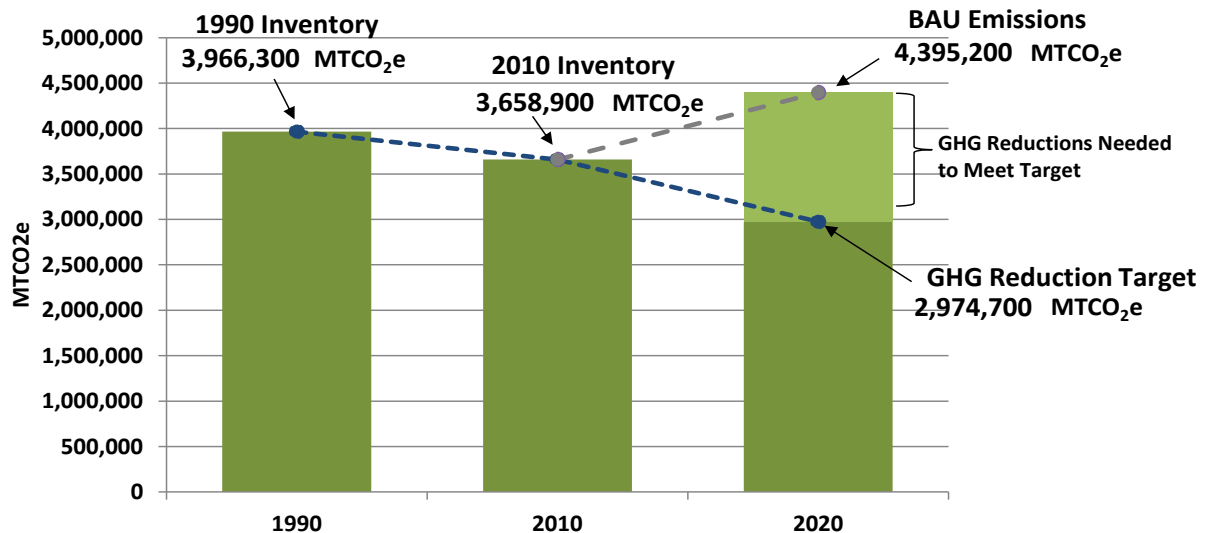
**Human-induced climate change is a global challenge that demands action at every level, including local government.** Sonoma County communities are established leaders in locally-based efforts to combat global climate change, and this Climate Action Plan (CAP) takes another step forward as local governments and regional agencies commit to concrete actions that will further reduce countywide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and create a better future for Sonoma County.

## ES.2 A Call to Action: Climate Change is a Serious Threat, But We Know What to Do

Given the magnitude of human-induced climate change and the projected catastrophic effects from continued global warming, reducing GHG emissions has become an environmental and societal imperative. This CAP is needed because, despite local and state leadership, GHG emissions in Sonoma County will continue to grow without additional action. The chart below shows how emissions in various sectors are forecast to increase if a “business-as-usual” approach is taken.









*Climate Action 2020* begins a new phase of local climate action by focusing on near-term actions that will be implemented through 2020 to achieve a 25% reduction in regional GHG emissions (compared to 1990 levels). The figure below shows 1990 emissions (known as a “backcast”), emissions from the 2010 inventory, and projected GHG increases if no action is taken (BAU), as well as the GHG reduction target under this CAP.



This CAP builds on earlier efforts to chart a future that will dramatically reduce countywide GHG emissions. These earlier efforts include the State of California’s adoption of AB 32 (2006), which requires statewide GHG emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020, and more recent executive orders that target even deeper GHG reductions in the future. Here in Sonoma County, community leaders and forward-thinking elected officials throughout Sonoma County worked together to adopt an ambitious GHG reduction target in 2005 and to create the nation’s first Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA), to coordinate countywide efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

In addition, the City of Santa Rosa adopted a Community Climate Action Plan in 2012 and a Municipal Climate Action Plan in 2013. These plans are referenced in this CAP, and their implementation will contribute substantially to regional GHG reductions. Although this CAP does not contain a chapter focused on Santa Rosa, data in the CAP include Santa Rosa to provide a county-wide picture and measure of future needed action.

Sonoma County’s regional GHG reduction target will be met by combining the new actions described in this CAP with ongoing efforts already underway to accomplish the following 20 goals, grouped together by sector:

Sector	Key	Goals
<b>Building Energy</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase building energy efficiency</li> <li>2. Increase renewable energy use</li> <li>3. Switch equipment from fossil fuel to electricity</li> </ol>
<b>Transportation &amp; Land Use</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Reduce travel demand through focused growth</li> <li>5. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon transportation options</li> <li>6. Increase vehicle and equipment fuel efficiency</li> <li>7. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon fuels in vehicles and equipment</li> <li>8. Reduce idling</li> </ol>
<b>Solid Waste Generation</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Increase solid waste diversion</li> <li>10. Increase capture and use of methane from landfills</li> </ol>
<b>Water Conveyance &amp; Wastewater Treatment</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Reduce water consumption</li> <li>12. Increase recycled water and greywater use</li> <li>13. Increase water and wastewater infrastructure efficiency</li> <li>14. Increase use of renewable energy in water and wastewater systems</li> </ol>
<b>Livestock &amp; Fertilizer</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Reduce emissions from livestock operations</li> <li>16. Reduce emissions from fertilizer use</li> </ol>
<b>Advanced Climate Initiatives</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Protect and enhance the value of open and working lands</li> <li>18. Promote sustainable agriculture</li> <li>19. Increase carbon sequestration</li> <li>20. Reduce emissions from consumption of goods and services, including food</li> </ol>

## ES.3 A Regional Approach to Reducing GHG Emissions

If ever an issue called for coordinated, multi-partner effort, it is climate change; progress depends on Sonoma County communities working together. Although state programs will be essential to meeting Sonoma County's GHG reduction goal, long-term regional collaboration will be needed to meet long-term goals. A regional GHG reduction goal—as opposed to individual goals for each jurisdiction—recognizes the shared nature of the challenge as well as the fact that Sonoma County communities each have a different capacity to achieve GHG reductions. This CAP identifies 14 GHG reduction measures for local agency implementation. Each city and the County selected the specific measures to include in their jurisdiction's commitments.

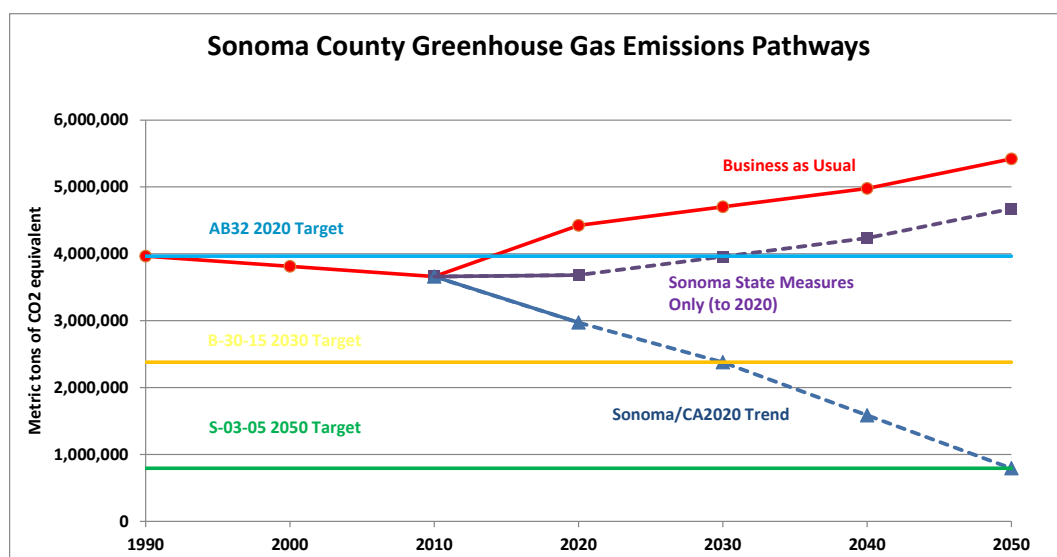
This CAP also includes GHG reduction measures that will be implemented by regional entities that can provide some services and resources on behalf of *all* communities more efficiently than the individual jurisdictions can on their own, especially the smaller cities. Examples include the RCPA and Sonoma Clean Power, which provides electricity with lower carbon content.

## ES.4 Putting This Climate Action Plan to Work

Through this CAP, Sonoma County communities have set an ambitious target for GHG emissions reduction, one that will require decisive and timely action by the local partners. The RCPA will coordinate and facilitate implementation actions by the cities and the county, and regional agencies. Each city and the county will develop its own implementation team for the actions that will occur at the local government level.

**Monitoring and Adaptive Management.** To ensure that GHG reduction efforts are effective and to adapt to changing technologies, regulations, and community behavior, the CAP calls for ongoing monitoring and adaptive management. Two interim GHG emissions inventories will be completed before 2020 and the RCPA Board will conduct a mid-course review to identify changes that may be needed to stay on-target. Equally important, the results of the interim inventories and the mid-course review will be reported to the community.

This CAP is one part of a much longer term GHG reduction effort. Even with the ambitious GHG reduction goal in this CAP, further actions will be needed to meet longer-term goals. Thus, in adopting this CAP, the RCPA will also adopt goals to reduce GHG emissions by 40% (compared to 1990) by 2030, and by 80% by 2050, which will necessitate another phase of climate action planning after 2020. The good news is that the actions in this CAP will put the county on a solid trajectory for achieving the longer term goals.



## ES.5 How Will This Plan Help Sonoma County Residents and Businesses?

**Reducing GHG Emissions is Good Business.** Reducing GHG emissions will save money for Sonoma County residents and business owners. Weatherizing or adding solar to existing homes, for example, creates construction jobs and cuts residents' utility bills. When businesses increase

energy efficiency or add on-site renewable energy generation, they reduce operating costs and employ electricians, engineers, builders and plumbers. Sonoma County businesses are already exporting the products and services they develop to respond to climate change. For example, California Clean Power is a new local business that helps other cities launch community choice aggregation programs. As the world moves to a low-carbon economy and invests in climate-ready communities, Sonoma County businesses will reap the rewards of their leadership.

**Reducing GHG Emissions Supports Other Community Goals (Co-benefits).** Implementing the CAP will result in environmental and community co-benefits that go beyond GHG emissions reductions. For example, many of the actions will improve public health by reducing air pollutants like ozone, carbon monoxide, and fine particulates. Reduction measures focused on reducing energy use in the transportation and building energy sectors can help lessen the impact of future energy cost increases.

Even with strong action to reduce GHG emissions, climate-related changes to natural and human systems cannot be avoided entirely. Sonoma County is already experiencing some of these effects, including higher temperatures and more variable rainfall. In response, this CAP also establishes goals for improving climate resilience in three key community resource areas: people and social systems; built systems; and natural and working lands. Many of the strategies to reduce emissions will also help strengthen climate resilience too.

The measures in this CAP provide an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and achieve a diverse range of community co-benefits, identified in the plan with these icons:



Energy Savings



Air Quality Improvements



Public Health Improvements



Job Creation



Resource Conservation



Cost Savings



Climate Resilience

## ES.6 How Can Sonoma County Residents Help?

**Learn about your household carbon footprint.** The everyday activities of Sonoma County residents result in GHG emissions, including driving a vehicle, using fossil fuels to light and heat homes, and throwing away household garbage. This CAP focuses on actions that will be taken by cities and the County. Residents can help by supporting local adoption of these actions and participating in the programs that will result from this CAP (see below). In addition to municipal programs, residents can also learn about their household carbon footprint and ways to reduce GHG emissions through their own actions – such as driving an electric vehicle, installing solar or buying electricity from Sonoma Clean Power.

**Participate in programs to reduce local emissions.** The good news is that while human activities are a major climate change driver, we can also be part of the solution. Sonoma County residents can make impactful choices and changes in their daily lives such as changing lightbulbs to CFLs or LEDs, sealing and insulating their homes, reusing and/or recycling materials that might otherwise be thrown away, and using water more efficiently. Residents can also choose to buy items made from local, renewable materials and make other low-carbon lifestyle choices, such as walking or biking, using public transportation, or eating less meat and more local vegetables. This CAP identifies some of the resources available to Sonoma County residents to help make these changes.

## ES.7 Public Outreach and Community Engagement

This CAP was prepared with input from community members, elected officials, and staff from the partner agencies. Ten open house-style public workshops were held, including one in each city. These meetings solicited public input on the types of reduction measures that should be included in the CAP. The role of local governments in addressing climate change and reducing GHG emissions was also discussed. The community dialogue that has begun with preparation of this plan will continue throughout implementation of the GHG emissions reduction measures.

To help guide the CAP development process, the RCPA board of directors also selected a Stakeholder Advisory Group to represent a diversity of viewpoints and technical expertise from each jurisdiction. Three representatives from each city and two representatives from each county supervisorial district were selected; some representatives had input from city councils, though none were elected officials themselves. The Group met five times at key milestones during the project. All meetings were open to the public and each meeting included an opportunity for the public to provide comments.